

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9761
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 04636

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLAB, FR
SUBJECT: ETUC SEC GEN VISITS PARIS

1. MATHIAS HINTERSCHIED, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ETUC), VISITED PARIS 3 FEBRUARY AND PAID COURTESY CALLS ON THE TWO ETUC AFFILIATES FO AND CFDT. SOURCES FROM BOTH ORGANIZATIONS TOLD US THAT HINTERSCHIED EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES HE FINDS IN SEEKING TO IDENTIFY ISSUES ON WHICH THE ETUC AFFILIATES WOULD AGREE TO UNDERTAKE A MEANINGFUL COORDINATED ACTION. HE CONFIDED THAT THE TWO MAJOR ETUC AFFILIATES, DGB AND TUC, ARE THE MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCKS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEIR SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE
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GOVERNMENTS INHIBITS THEM FROM TAKING AN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNION POINT OF VIEW.

2. HINTERSCHIED MADE THE POINT ALSO THAT THE ETUC AFFILIATES HAVE NOT DEVELOPED YET "AN ESPRIT DE CORPS" AND THEREFORE HAVE NOT LEARNED TO ACT UNDER THE ETUC AUSPICES AND LABEL. THIS APPLIES ALSO EVEN IN CASES

WHERE SIMPLE ACTIONS WERE AGREED UPON AND REQUESTED BY ETUC. HE CITED THE EXAMPLE OF THE RECENT DECISION TAKEN BY THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CALLING UPON THE AFFILIATES TO FORCEFULLY PETITION THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO GIVE PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT. ONLY ONE AFFILIATE RESPONDED TO THIS APPEAL. HINTERSCHIED THOUGHT THAT THIS DEMONSTRATES HIS POINT AND WONDERED WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO DEVELOP GREATER RESPONSIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE ETUC AFFILIATES.

3. BOTH THE CFDT AND FO SOURCES RECOGNIZED THAT HINTERSCHIED HAD A POINT AND EXPLAINED THEIR OWN FAILURE TO RESPOND TO THE ETUC DECISION ABOVE BY THE FACT THAT THEY HAD ALREADY TAKEN SUCH ACTION TO PRESS GOF ON THE UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUE AND DID NOT THINK THAT ONE MORE PIECE OF CORRESPONDENCE WOULD HAVE MADE THAT MUCH DIFFERENCE. BUT THEY RECOGNIZED ALSO THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE RECORD AND FOR THE PRESTIGE OF ETUC IF THEY HAD PETITIONED THE GOF IN THE NAME OF ETUC BY POINTING OUT THAT SIMILAR ACTION WAS BEING TAKEN SIMULTANEOUSLY THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE.

4. THE FO SOURCE CONFIDED THAT A NUMBER OF THE EUROPEAN LABOR LEADERS IN ETUC ARE BECOMING NOW AWARE AND INDEED BEGIN TO TALK ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE ETUC SECRETARY GENERAL IS NOT AN INTELLECTUAL GIANT NOR A MAN OF GREAT VISION. IRONICALLY THE MORE OUTSPOKEN IN THIS CONNECTION ARE THE DGB LEADERS
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WHO, HOWEVER, WERE THE FIRST TO RECOMMEND HINTERSCHIED FOR THE JOB AND TO HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO HIM BY DIRECT CONTACT BEFORE OTHER ETUC LEADERS HAD A CHANCE TO CONSIDER HIS CANDIDACY. THE SAME SOURCE REVEALED THAT THE TWO MORE PROMINENT NAMES THAT HAD BEEN CONSIDERED FOR ETUC SECRETARY GENERAL WERE VENDERVECK, DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ICFTU, AND ENZO FRISO, NOW ICFTU ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

5. THE CFDT SOURCE INDICATED THAT THE CFDT LEADERS SHARE THE FOREGOING MISGIVINGS ABOUT HINTERSCHIED BUT AT THE SAME TIME APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT HE HAS COME UP FROM THE RANKS AND WAS NOT A UNION STAFF MEMBER AS IS THE CASE WITH THE PRESENT ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL.

6. COMMENT: WHAT'S INTERESTING IN THE FOREGOING CRITICAL VIEWS ABOUT HINTERSCHIED IS ALSO THE FACT THAT OTHER ETUC LEADERS, IN THIS CASE FO, ARE QUICK

TO RECALL THAT DGB WAS MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR
HINTERSCHIED'S SELECTION.
RUSH

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